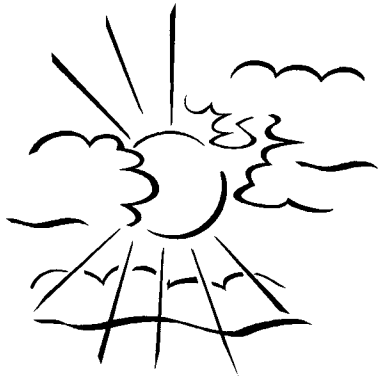


***Department  
of  
Human  
Services***

Prepared by the  
DHS Office of  
Communications  
(517) 373-7394



**Articles in Today's Clips  
Friday, November 18, 2005**

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

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# **SUSAN TOMPOR: Ex-number cruncher finds Medicare research numbing**

**Staying with employer coverage for prescription drugs is his safe choice**

November 18, 2005

BY SUSAN TOMPOR  
FREE PRESS COLUMNIST

John Lear approached Medicare's new prescription drug coverage just as you'd expect a retired accountant to do.

The Livonia widower spent hours digging up prices for premiums and co-pays. He sifted through every number he could find.

Thanks to the Free Press and the Senior Alliance in Wayne, he got personalized help -- on top of his research -- that tapped into Medicare's computerized tools for sorting through the dozens of plans.

Bottom line: If Lear drops the retiree drug coverage he currently receives through **Unisys Corp.** and signs up for one of the new Medicare plans, he could save about \$700 on premiums and co-pays, cutting his costs by about 20%.

But, given the confusion, Lear isn't budging. He's happily sticking with his old Unisys plan.

"I'm a little skeptical," said Lear, 77.

While he'd never pay for an extended warranty on an appliance, he's willing to dish out more cash for peace of mind on a drug plan.

"It's an important thing, your health coverage," he said.

Deciding whether to stick with his current coverage or jump to one of the new prescription drug plans offered under what's called Medicare Part D haunted Lear 24-7.

At one point, he even woke up at 4:30 in the morning -- with thoughts about Part D.

His conclusion: "This is a very difficult thing for people who have to deal with this. Maybe it's worse for me because I'm an accountant."

Lear isn't alone. Sign-ups started Tuesday. Benefits are to begin Jan. 1. But with 78 different plans to choose from -- all with different premiums, deductibles, co-pays and levels of coverage -- Michigan seniors are having a tough time finding the one that's just right for them.

For Lear, the process began when he got a letter from Unisys that said he'd have to reenroll for his medical and drug coverage by Nov. 11 or he would default to medical-only coverage for 2006.

And then he would have to enroll in Medicare Part D before January if he wanted any help paying for his prescriptions.

When Lear got the company's notice last month, he went into gear to do his research. His company told him he had creditable prescription drug coverage under his Unisys plan. That means he has proof that he had good prescription drug coverage. If the company discontinues its good coverage in the future, people with creditable coverage wouldn't have to pay any penalties if they sign up for Medicare Part D after May 15, 2006.

But Lear, who retired in 1991, began exploring his options because Unisys raised another point.

Another letter suggested that the specific plan that Lear had, called PRM, might be more costly than if the retiree opted for another Unisys medical-only plan that costs \$147 a month and then got Part D prescription coverage.

"Medicare prescription drug coverage is likely to be a better financial opportunity than the full PRM option, if you are eligible," the company said.

And that's probably true.

To keep that plan, which includes medical coverage, Lear would pay \$349 a month in 2006. He would pay \$50 in co-pays for a 90-day supply for each of his four drugs.

He expects to pay \$4,988 for extra medical coverage, prescription drugs and co-pays.

When he worked out numbers for just the drug coverage under that PRM plan, Lear figured he would pay about \$2,420 in premiums for drug coverage alone through Unisys. And he'd pay another \$800 in co-pays. The total cost: About \$3,220.

So he had to find a Medicare Part D plan that would cost him less than \$3,220.

Lear got brochures from the **AARP** Medicare Rx Plan and **Aetna** Medicare Rx among others. He thought he found a few plans that might save him money but he was never sure.

Ron Lieberman, a retiree and volunteer for the Senior Alliance, also known as the Area Agency on Aging 1-C, entered the picture this week at my request -- after Lear made his decision to stay with Unisys.

Lear still was curious and thought he might be able to change his mind.

Lieberman ran Lear's specific prescriptions, including dosages, through the calculators on the Medicare Web site, [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

When the program ran Monday, Lieberman found out that under the cheapest plan Lear could pay a total of \$2,380 for his premium and co-pays. That option involved a standard stand-alone prescription drug plan through **Humana Inc.** The premium in Michigan is \$13.75 a month.

Done deal?

Not quite.

Remember, this calculator at the Medicare Web site has been full of glitches.

When Lieberman ran the program again Wednesday, the calculator showed the cost for that same Humana plan would be \$2,546 -- up \$166 a year from the Monday quote.

And then when Lieberman went to the Humana Web site at [www.humana.com](http://www.humana.com) Wednesday, he came up with \$2,498 -- up \$118 from the Monday quote but down \$48 from the Wednesday quote on the Medicare site.

Confusing?

Oh, yeah.

So Lieberman, a retired engineer from **DTE Energy**, suggests that seniors wait two weeks or so before making any decisions, as the much-publicized bugs on that computer site are worked out. Lieberman still says the computer is the best option for calculating the total costs of a specific Medicare prescription drug plan for a specific individual. You can't just look at premiums; you must also consider the costs of deductibles and co-pays. Total costs can vary depending on the drugs you take.

If seniors can't use a computer, Lieberman tells them "go to your grandkids -- have a little bit of togetherness."

As for Lear, even if he could change his mind -- and it appears he can't -- he wouldn't want to make the switch. He's glad he kept what he had.

He knows his own plan. And he's concerned that any new plan might not be as good as it seems. Or the costs could go up significantly.

And even with outside help, he still finds Medicare D daunting.  
"I finally got to the point where I got to burn out on this thing," Lear said.

Contact **SUSAN TOMPOR** at 313-222-8876 or [tomp@freepress.com](mailto:tomp@freepress.com).

John Lear

- **Age:** 77

**Hometown:** Livonia

**Living on:** Social Security and his pension of about \$35,000 a year.

**Drugs:** Protonix, which treats stomach acid and prevents ulcers; Toprol, which treats high blood pressure; Tricor, which improves cholesterol levels by lowering total cholesterol; and Vytorin, a cholesterol-blocking drug.

**John's advice to other seniors:** When you're pricing out a plan, do not look at just the insurance premium. He says you absolutely must take time to find out what the co-pays are for each drug that you use and how those co-pays vary for specific plans.

Also keep an eye on the doughnut hole -- or coverage gap. Once total drug costs hit \$2,250 in 2006, a consumer would pay up to 100% of his or her drug costs until a certain level is spent.

Your plan would pay nothing during this coverage gap. John also researched some plans that did not include this doughnut hole -- but premiums were significantly higher. The coverage gap itself has a maximum out-of-pocket cost of \$2,850. After the gap, catastrophic coverage takes over, limiting consumers to paying 5%, or a \$2 co-pay on a generic and a \$5 co-pay on a brand-name drug.

Last in a 5-part Medicare drug plan series

- How are seniors choosing a Medicare prescription drug plan or not? Here's what they say in this week's Free Press series.

**Monday:** Marcia and Lester Weiner: She has no coverage. He makes a co-payment through Veterans Affairs.

**Tuesday:** Barbara and Ted Coden: His former employer offers better drug coverage than Medicare.

**Wednesday:** Alan and Daisy Dopke of Oak Park pick a familiar insurer.

**Thursday:** Employers' letters to Frances and Richard Mackie make their decision harder.

**Today:** John Lear, a former accountant, does the numbers.

- Log on to [www.freep.com](http://www.freep.com) for previous days of this report.

# 'I still don't understand': Medicare choices overwhelming

Friday, November 18, 2005

By Pati LaLonde  
Bay City Times Writer

On the surface, the Medicare Part D prescription Drug Benefit plan looks pretty simple. Find a plan that covers all or most of your prescription needs and go with it.

However, with 40 plans being offered, many senior citizens still find the issue too confusing to confidently pick one that works for them.

About 35 senior citizens attended a presentation Thursday on the new Medicare plans at Bangor Township Hall. When it was all over, many of those who were confused before the talk were still confused afterward.

"I still don't understand all of it," said Frances Brewer, 85, of Bangor Township.

Brewer, like many senior citizens, received a form in the mail to determine if she qualifies for help paying for premiums. It requires her to sign up for a Medicare prescription plan - and if she doesn't sign up by May 15, the government will choose one for her.

"I filled out the form and got a statement that said I would get help, but I don't understand the plans," she said.

Help is also available through a Web site, Social Security officials said Thursday. That wasn't much consolation - only two people had computers at home.

It's easy to be overwhelmed, many in attendance said.

"There are so many different places, different prices, different plans," said Frieda Wagner, 81, of Bangor Township.

Betty Stevens of Bangor Township decided the easiest thing to do might be to have her son make the decision for her.

But in spite of the all the confusion, the new plan is a plus for senior citizens, said Michael J. Kegley, a 64-year-old retired insurance salesman who attended the meeting with his wife, Mary, 65.

"I think it's a wonderful thing," he said. "So many seniors have to decide are they going to buy medication or food."

Cynthia Edwards, a public affairs specialist for Social Security, explained the basics: Medicare has contracted with insurance companies to provide prescription coverage, allowing those on Medicare to get drugs at a lower cost.

"It's for all Medicare beneficiaries, not just senior citizens," she said. "Those that automatically qualify for Medicare could be covered under the prescription drug plan."

Among the 40 plans are some that are nationwide and others that cover Michigan residents. If you live in another state part of the year, you must ensure the plan you choose is a nationwide plan.

Signing up for a plan is voluntary for Medicare beneficiaries, unless they are also on Medicaid, a federally and state-funded program for low-income individuals. Then it's mandatory.

Those that don't sign up before May 15 face a 1 percent per month penalty until they do sign up. Open enrollment will take place each year in November and December.

Edwards says even those who are not on medication now should sign up.

"You can't predict the future," she said. "You might not take anything right now, but two or three months from now you may have an illness strike. You may end up wishing you would have signed."

Kegley says the easiest way to choose the plan that is right for you is to make a list of all the medications you take. Then go through each plan and see which one covers the most, or which one covers most of the most expensive medications you take.

For Barbara Hine, 77, and husband, Vernon, 76, it's not that simple. The couple has insurance through the Brick Mason and Plaster International Union. They received a letter from the union telling them that if they enrolled in one of the Medicare plans, they would lose the prescription plan they already have.

"I think (Medicare) is silly and there are too many rules," said Barbara Hine. "There are 40 different plans. For most, it is hard to understand what would be best for us. They've got to tone it down."

- Pati LaLonde is a features writer for The Times. She can be reached at (989) 894-9666, or by e-mail at [plalonde@bc-times.com](mailto:plalonde@bc-times.com).

# A Private Obsession

"Lots of things in life are complicated." So declared Michael Leavitt, the secretary of health and human services, in response to the mass confusion as registration for the new Medicare drug benefit began. But the complexity of the program — which has reduced some retirees to tears as they try to make what may be life-or-death decisions — is far greater than necessary.

One reason the drug benefit is so confusing is that older Americans can't simply sign up with Medicare, as they can for other benefits. They must, instead, choose from a baffling array of plans offered by private middlemen. Why?

Here's a parallel. Earlier this year Senator Rick Santorum introduced a bill that would have forced the National Weather Service to limit the weather information directly available to the public. Although he didn't

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## The ideology behind the Medicare mess.

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say so explicitly, he wanted the service to funnel that information through private forecasters instead.

Mr. Santorum's bill didn't go anywhere. But it was a classic attempt to force gratuitous privatization: involving private corporations in the delivery of public services even when those corporations have no useful role to play.

The Medicare drug benefit is an example of gratuitous privatization on a grand scale.

Here's some background: the elderly have long been offered a choice between standard Medicare, in which the government pays medical bills directly, and plans in which the government pays a middleman, like an H.M.O., to deliver health care. The theory was that the private sector would find innovative ways to lower costs while providing better care.

The theory was wrong. A number of studies have found that managed-care plans, which have much higher administrative costs than government-managed Medicare, end up costing the system money, not saving it.

But privatization, once promoted as a way to save money, has become a goal in itself. The 2003 bill that established the prescription drug benefit also locked in large subsidies for managed care.

And on drug coverage, the 2003 bill went even further: rather than merely subsidizing private plans, it made them mandatory. To receive the drug benefit, one must sign up with a plan offered by a private company. As people are discovering, the result is a deeply confusing system because the competing private plans differ in ways that are very hard to assess.

The peculiar structure of the drug benefit, with its huge gap in coverage — the famous "doughnut hole" I wrote about last week — adds to the confusion. Many better-off retirees have relied on Medigap policies to cover gaps in traditional Medicare, including prescription drugs. But that straightforward approach, which would make it relatively easy to compare drug plans, can't be used to fill the doughnut hole because Medigap policies are no longer allowed to cover drugs.

The only way to get some coverage in the gap is as part of a package in which you pay extra — a lot extra — to one of the private drug plans delivering the basic benefit. And because this coverage is bundled with other aspects of the plans, it's very difficult to figure out which plans offer the best deal.

But confusion isn't the only, or even the main, reason why the privatization of drug benefits is bad for America. The real problem is that we'll end up spending too much and getting too little.

Everything we know about health economics indicates that private drug plans will have much higher administrative costs than would have been incurred if Medicare had administered the benefit directly.

It's also clear that the private plans will spend large sums on marketing rather than on medicine. I have nothing against Don Shula, the former head coach of the Miami Dolphins, who is promoting a drug plan offered by Humana. But do we really want people choosing drug plans based on which one hires the most persuasive celebrity?

Last but not least, competing private drug plans will have less clout in negotiating lower drug prices than Medicare as a whole would have. And the law explicitly forbids Medicare from intervening to help the private plans negotiate better deals.

Last week I explained that the Medicare drug bill was devised by people who don't believe in a positive role for government. An insistence on gratuitous privatization is a byproduct of the same ideology. And the result of that ideology is a piece of legislation so bad it's almost surreal. □

November 18, 2005

## **Man convicted in Kingsley CSC case**

FROM STAFF REPORTS

TRAVERSE CITY - A Kingsley man was convicted on charges he took sexually explicit photos of underage girls attending a party at his home.

Timothy Lee Glazier, 42, was convicted Wednesday of felony charges of criminal sexual abusive activity and possession of sexually abusive material, as well as misdemeanor fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct, after a two-day jury trial in 13th Circuit Court.

Glazier was arrested in September after a teenage girl told police he took pictures of her posing nude at his home last December.

The girl said she later saw those pictures on Glazier's computer, which was seized by Grand Traverse County sheriff's officials.

On the computer, detectives said they found numerous pictures of the victim and two other girls in sexually explicit poses.

Glazier, who still is facing other felony charges of sexually abusive activity, could be sentenced to a maximum of 20 years in prison.



# Substitute bus driver faces Internet sex charges

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Friday November 18, 2005

By Paul Janczewski

pjanczewski@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6333

"Kelly" was a 13-year-old girl interested in modeling when she encountered a man in an Internet chat room using a sexually explicit screen name.

Between March and August, police allege the man - Richard C. Long, a substitute bus driver for Davison School District - chatted up the teen more than two dozen times.

He chatted about the girl's appearance and sexual experiences he would like to share with her.

Finally, Long, 46, of Genesee Township, began exposing himself to the girl via his webcam.

But "Kelly" was really Michael R. Ondejko, a special agent in state attorney general's Child & Public Protection Unit.

Now, Long faces a Nov. 28 circuit court arraignment before Genesee Circuit Judge Richard B. Yuille on 10 charges related to child sexually abusive activity and using a computer to send obscene matter to minors.

Two charges carry up to 20 years in prison upon conviction, while the remaining eight charges are 4-year felonies.

During a preliminary examination, Ondejko said Long was arrested Aug. 10 after investigators went to his residence with search warrants. He said they seized computers, and later Long admitted to chatting with "Kelly."

Long also told police he did not show up at a planned meeting with the girl because a courthouse was located nearby.

Long recently was determined competent for trial after an examination by state psychiatrists at the Center for Forensic Psychiatry near Ann Arbor.

He told officials he was adopted and had been abused earlier by his biological family.

Long's wife and mother also sent letters to Central District Judge Larry J. Stecco pleading to give him a second chance.

Long, who is represented by attorney Steven Lazzio, is being held in the Genesee County Jail on a \$500,000 cash bond.

# Back in Care of Her Father, Girl, 7, Is Killed

By LESLIE KAUFMAN and COREY KILGANNON

Published: November 18, 2005

*The New York Times*

A Queens father was charged yesterday with killing his 7-year-old daughter, who tested positive for cocaine when she was born, spent time in foster care, and came to the attention of a city agency again two years ago because of suspicious injuries.

Sierra Roberts lived with her father, Russell Roberts, on the second floor of this house on Hillmeyer Avenue in Arverne, Queens.

The girl, Sierra Roberts, died on Oct. 25. An autopsy revealed severe internal injuries, including a ruptured bowel and extensive internal lacerations, according to the authorities.

Prosecutors said her father, Russell Roberts, had physically abused her on Oct. 23 and 24, kneeling her in the abdomen on the first day and then bending her over the edge of a bed and beating her with a belt on the second day. Then, they said, knowing that Sierra was suffering, he waited before calling 911.

It was the second time in two weeks that a birth parent was charged in the death of a child who had been placed in foster care by the city and then returned to the home.

Last week, Tracina Vaughn was charged with reckless endangerment in Brooklyn because, prosecutors said, she had left her 16-month-old son, Dahquay Gillians, unsupervised in the bathtub, where he drowned.

The back-to-back arrests come as the city has sought to emphasize its policy of keeping children with their birth parents whenever possible.

When Sierra Helena Roberts's short life began, she tested positive for cocaine at birth and was immediately placed in foster care. She was returned to her father in 2001. Her mother, Mitchelena Hines, lives in North Carolina.

In 2003, the Administration for Children's Services received a call from a Brooklyn doctor who was treating Sierra for a broken leg and learned, from another hospital, that she had sustained a fractured spine six months earlier. The agency investigated the injuries but accepted the father's assertions that both had occurred as a result of accidental falls.

The way prosecutors say the girl sustained the fatal injuries was detailed during Mr. Roberts's arraignment yesterday in State Supreme Court in Queens on charges of second-degree murder, second-degree manslaughter, first-degree assault and endangering the welfare of a child.

"He kned Sierra several times in the abdomen, noticed the pain, did nothing about it," an assistant district attorney, Leigh Bishop, said. The father "then beat her with a belt the night before she died," Mr. Bishop said. Sierra was neither conscious nor breathing when she was brought by ambulance to Peninsula General Hospital in Far Rockaway. She was declared dead soon after.

His lawyer, Howard R. Teichner, said Mr. Roberts was pleading not guilty. According to a court document, Mr. Roberts told the police that his daughter had been hurt while they were wrestling. The Administration for Children's Services said yesterday that it had received no complaints about the Roberts family since 2003.

John B. Mattingly, the commissioner of the agency, said it would review all of its current practices regarding reunification of children with their biological parents after children have been in foster care.

"Sierra had not been in our care for the last four years," he said in a written statement, "but we take responsibility for finding out whether Children's Services might have been able to do anything more to protect her during that time. We will make a full report to the public on this tragedy as soon as our investigation is complete."

The girl, nicknamed C.C., attended first grade at P.S. 42. Several neighbors of the father and daughter on their quiet residential street in the Arverne section of the Rockaways said they had seen no signs of potential abuse. The father did not appear to work, they said, but the child was always neat and he walked her to school every day and was always with her.

But Catherine Harris, 31, who had an apartment in the same neat townhouse complex, said she was troubled by the father-daughter relationship. At one point this year, she said, she noticed that Sierra had a bloodshot eye and asked the girl about it, but Sierra told Ms. Harris she had run into a doorknob.

"His daughter was afraid of him, you could tell," Ms. Harris said.

She said she had called Children's Services to complain but had heard nothing back.

Children's Services said it first took custody of Sierra in January 1998, right after she and her mother both tested positive for cocaine in the hospital.

Alonzo Freeman, 62, the girl's foster father, described Sierra as a happy child who lived easily with his other foster children, four boys.

"She was such a sweet girl - he didn't deserve her," Mr. Freeman said of Mr. Roberts. "She was a very, very smart child."

The baby's mother was out of her life, the agency said, but Mr. Roberts took classes on being a parent and drug treatment classes and continued to visit with Sierra each week.

In 2001, in part on the recommendation of a nonprofit agency, Miracle Makers, that had contracted with the city to provide services, Family Court sent Sierra back to her father and required no further supervision.

The city canceled its foster care contracts with Miracle Makers earlier this year because the agency consistently had the lowest rankings on annual evaluations.

The 2003 call to state authorities came after the doctor in Brooklyn - whose name the agency would not disclose - reported the broken leg and the earlier fractured spine, the child welfare agency said. The agency sent a team to investigate, and the team spoke to Mr. Roberts, the doctor and the child's former foster mother, who remained in contact with the family.

Mr. Roberts had told the doctor that Sierra fell and hurt her back, and that the later leg injury occurred when he slipped and fell while carrying the child up some stairs. The child welfare agency accepted the explanations.

The agency's last visit to the child was in July 2003.

At the girl's school yesterday, Alicea Flynn, secretary for the school's parent advisory council, said there had been "absolutely no signs of abuse" with Sierra.

"He was our only single-parent dad, and he was so close, so protective of her," she said.

On Nov. 2, Sierra was laid out in white with a tiara on her head at a memorial service at the Humbleway Church for God and Christ in Ozone Park.

"She looked old, beat up and worn out," Ms. Harris, the neighbor, said. "She looked 30 years old, like they put makeup on her and stuffed her in a box."

Colin Moynihan contributed reporting for this article.

# Repressed memories are real

FLINT JOURNAL LETTER TO THE EDITOR

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Friday, November 18, 2005

JOURNAL READER

The article written by James L. Smith titled "Team response to sexual assaults proposed" [Region & State, Nov. 4, Page A5] is greatly appreciated.

It's sad to say that some of our legislators in Lansing, including the judicial committee, believe that "repressed memory" doesn't exist. Many past victims of sexual abuse are presently losing their date in court because of the statute of limitation runs out before many of these incidents come back due to repressed memories.

Every parent should be extremely cautious when it comes to trusting who their children are with. There are pedophiles who are free to victimize your innocent lives.

Please parents, contact your state representative or state senator to do away with statute of limitations of sexual abuse on innocent children. Those little lives are ruined forever. Thank you, Lapeer County, for taking even these steps to stop this devastation of young lives.

John P. Antos  
Flushing

# Jurors reject self-defense theory

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Friday, November 18, 2005

By Paul Janczewski  
pjanczewski@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6333

Jurors rejected a self-defense theory and deliberated only 75 minutes before convicting a Flint woman of first-degree murder for firing four bullets into her boyfriend - three in his back. LaDonna R. Cummings, 32, faces life in prison without parole when sentenced Dec. 11 by Genesee Circuit Judge Judith A. Fullerton.

Cummings, who also faces 2 years for felony firearms use, hung her head as jurors read the verdicts Tuesday.

Assistant Genesee County Prosecutor Janet McLaren said the victim's family and her office were grateful for the verdict.

"But now the families have to deal with small children who are left with no parents," McLaren said.

Cummings and her boyfriend, Terrence T. Saines, had two children together, and Cummings has a child from a previous relationship.

Saines, 34, was shot about 2 a.m. July 13 at 322 E. Russell Ave. after he and Cummings argued.

Witnesses testified the two had a stormy 12-year relationship and were seeing other people.

Celeste M. Redmond, the victim's mother, testified Cummings told her at one point to buy a black dress because she would soon be attending a funeral.

Angela Ratcliff, who said she dated Saines, testified she listened on the telephone as Saines pleaded for his life as Cummings held him at gunpoint, and then heard gunshots.

The events leading to the slaying began when Cummings couldn't get into the residence because the locks had been changed.

Police said Cummings turned herself in hours later, saying "I shot my baby's Daddy."

Cummings testified she fought with Saines and kicked him, causing a gun to fall from his waistband.

She said the two tussled for the weapon and she grabbed it, but said she did not mean to shoot him.

"I thought he was going to kill me," she said.

November 18, 2005

## Shelter, Inc. wreath sale under way

By JASON WITZ  
Alpena News Staff Writer

Carole Cadarette calls it the staple fund-raiser for Shelter, Inc.

Every year, the organization sells Christmas wreaths to help provide services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

And she doesn't expect the decorative objects to last long.

Cadarette, volunteer program coordinator for Shelter, Inc. Alpena, said the 300 wreaths could be sold out by early-December.

"A lot of people buy them as gifts," she said. "I buy one every year for my home and two more for grave (sites)."

The 24-inch wreath consists of three types of green and includes a red velvet bow. The cost is \$12 each. Shelter can deliver orders of a minimum of five wreaths to a location upon request.

Cadarette said the project will proceed until the 300 wreaths are sold. All proceeds will go toward the organization's general fund.

She said the fund-raiser has met positive results amongst the community.

"It's a good fund-raiser," Cadarette said. "It's a fine quality for the costs, and it comes at a time of the year where (we) use those funds for client needs.

"The people who buy these wreaths are the same ones who come back every year."

Shelter, Inc. has attempted to sell more than 300 wreaths in past years, but it encountered problems.

Cadarette said — despite the projects success — selling 500 to 1,000 wreaths is more difficult because of storage and volunteer constraints.

"Three hundred (wreaths) seems to be the number we can deal with realistically," she said.

Cadarette said the organization will make about \$1,800 from wreath sales this year.

For more information about the project, contact Shelter, Inc. Alpena at 354-9650 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

*Jason Witz can be reached via e-mail at [jwitz@thealpenanews.com](mailto:jwitz@thealpenanews.com) or by phone at 354-3111 ext. 318.*

*Livingston Briefs*

*Detroit News*

*November 18, 2005*

## **Howell**

### **Abuse shelter's workshop is Nov. 29**

LACASA, the county's shelter for abused women and children, will hold a workshop on Nov. 29 designed to help friends and family of children who have been sexually abused. The workshop, which is free and confidential, will be held from 6-7:30 p.m. at LACASA, 2895 W. Grand River in the city. For information or to register, call (517) 548-1350.



# Early childhood conference Saturday

## Howell event focusing on care, education includes more than 80 workshops

Friday, November 18, 2005

Ann Arbor News Staff Reporter

Anyone interested in early childhood care and education might want to check out the 15th Annual Community Sharing for Healthy Caring Early Childhood Conference Saturday, at Howell High School.

The Livingston County Community Coordinated Child Care 4C Council along with the Fifth Third Bank and the Howell Public Schools are sponsoring the conference. Livingston 4C Council Executive Director Linda Herbert says they are expecting more than 1,200 people, and anyone interested can register at the door.

"We have the conference because we have a mission here to develop a quality early childhood care and education system in our county," says Herbert. "With all of the early childhood research out there about brain development and quality practices for the development of young children, we feel it's our job to make sure the professionals working with young children have a chance to improve their skills and enhance their knowledge of early family and childhood services."

Herbert says 23 counties and three states will be represented at the conference, and she encourages anyone who works with young children to attend.

"What we're offering is very diverse - medical, businesses, child development, child care and parent-education workshops," says Herbert, who says there are more than 80 workshops this year.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. and the first session begins at 9 a.m. Todd Greenbaum, Michigan Wolf Trap Program coordinator and co-director of the Neighborhood Child Care Center, will present the keynote address at 10:45 a.m. He uses humor and nostalgia to teach people to bring out their own inner child.

Lisa Carolin can be reached at [lcarolin@livingstoncommunitynews.com](mailto:lcarolin@livingstoncommunitynews.com) or at (810) 844-2010.

# **Child care conference**

Ann Arbor News

Friday, November 18, 2005

What: Community Sharing for Healthy Caring Early Childhood Conference

When: Nov. 19, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

Where: Howell High School, 1200 W. Grand River Ave.

Registration: At the door costs \$50 and includes all classes, breakfast, lunch and snacks.

# 13-year-old held in armed robbery

Trace Christenson

*The Battle Creek Enquirer*

A 13-year-old Battle Creek boy was arrested Thursday night after Battle Creek police said he robbed a pizza store at gunpoint.

At 7:27 p.m. a person wearing a ski mask and holding a silver and black handgun entered the Little Caesars Pizza at 629 Capital Ave. S.W. and demanded money.

Police said no clerks were at the counter and the gunman demanded money from the customers and told them to put money in a knit cap he carried.

Lt. Duane Knight said about \$5 was placed in the cap but when employees who were crouched behind some ovens called police on a cell phone the gunman ran from the building without the money. Police said they located the 13-year-old boy a few blocks from the store. Officers said the boy dropped his coat as he was running.

Officers said the youth admitted to the robbery and said he used a plastic toy; however, police said late Thursday they had not recovered a weapon.

A department tracking dog followed a scent from the store to where the boy was

found, police said.

Officers said two other people may have been involved in the robbery and they were still being sought as possible suspects.

Police also said they are not sure if the robbery was connected to a series of holdups in Battle Creek.

Fourteen armed robberies have been reported in Battle Creek and the townships of Pennfield and Emmett, since Oct. 24.

Police arrested one man Monday after a gunman robbed a party store on West Territorial Road.

*Trace Christenson covers crime and courts. He can be reached at 966-0685 or [tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com](mailto:tchrist@battlecr.gannett.com)*

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Originally published  
November 18, 2005

# Hold juveniles accountable

FLINT JOURNAL LETTER TO THE EDITOR

LENNON

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Friday, November 18, 2005

JOURNAL READER

I felt unnerved when I read about human rights groups trying to get state and federal lawmakers to abolish the jailing of juveniles for life imprisonment ["Report's authors urge U.S. to quit jailing juveniles without parole," Oct. 12, Page A12]. When a person commits a crime, he or she must pay the penalty no matter the age.

I am a high school student and I believe our society feeds everyone a lie by suggesting our youth are not intelligent enough to understand that their actions have consequences. Juveniles should be held to the same standards of justice as adults. If a teen chooses to commit murder and is found guilty, the choice is easy: life without parole. The punishment needs to match the crime. We need to start teaching personal and moral responsibility to our youth. Today's choices will determine tomorrow's success or tomorrow's failure. What will it be?

Heather Moorehead

Lennon

# Food bank facing increase in need

## Envelope campaign seeks \$700,000 for local agencies

By STACEY RANGE

Lansing State Journal

With so many donations diverted to disaster relief this year, the Greater Lansing Food Bank kicked off its annual envelope drive Thursday issuing a plea for the community to help those here at home struggling as the local economy continues to sputter and heating

costs rise.

"Those most in need are being hit the hardest," Executive Director Sharon Krinock said. "They are your child's friend, your neighbor, your co-worker. They are turning to the food banks this year for help."

Area food banks have seen a spike in need this year. In the past four months, the number of families seek-

ing help from the 27 area food banks each month has jumped from 1,500 to 1,660, said Mary Meirndorf, director of the Ingham County Food Bank. In 1980, food banks saw an average of 200 families a month.

"We all need to make choices, but we shouldn't have to choose to feed our families," Meirndorf said during Thursday's kickoff event at the Cristo Rey Community Center in north Lansing.

The 24th annual envelope drive aims to collect \$700,000 this year to help fund pantries

### How to give

- **Send checks to the Greater Lansing Food Bank, c/o Bank One, P.O. Box 11065, Lansing, MI 48901-1065**
- **Donate at [www.lansingfoodbank.org](http://www.lansingfoodbank.org)**
- **For more information, call 887-4307.**

in Ingham County as well as 37 human service agencies in the tri-county area.

The Lansing State Journal, a partner in the campaign, will include red-and-white donation envelopes in the newspaper Sunday as

### Coming Sunday

- **Record numbers of Michigan residents are seeking help from the federal government and local charities to buy their daily bread this year. Find out why and how you can help in Sunday's Lansing State Journal.**

well as in its Dec. 28 edition. Envelopes also will be distributed in the Lansing Community Newspapers, Noise and Michigan State University's student newspaper, The State News.

Shoppers also may pick

up envelopes at some area businesses, including L&L and Kroger grocery stores.

The food bank uses the cash to maximize purchases through the American Red Cross Regional Food Distribution Center in Lansing. The center warehouses food from many sources including supermarket donations.

A contribution of \$55 will feed a family of four for six days.

Donations through the envelope drive make up most of the food bank's annual food budget, Krinock said.

Last year's drive came up

about \$50,000 short of the \$700,000 goal.

Organizers remain hopeful for this year but are worried by the tight economy and because so many people have donated to hurricane relief efforts. Some food banks saw their donations down 50 percent in September.

Still, that doesn't diminish need here.

"It's growing, and it's not going to go away," Meirndorf said. "This envelope is critical."

Contact Stacey Range at 377-1157 or [srange@lsj.com](mailto:srange@lsj.com).

# Antwone Fisher discusses ripple effects of drugs

Though not a user, writer is proof that addiction exacts a wider toll.

*By Kimberly Hayes Taylor / The Detroit News*  
*Friday, November 18, 2005*

Few people understand the effects of drug and alcohol addiction better than Antwone Quenton Fisher.

"My mother was drug-addicted," Fisher says. "As a result, I was in foster care. I didn't have a parent who was there to protect me."

His mother gave birth to him in prison. His father was shot and killed before he was born. Fisher, now 46, grew up in Cleveland foster homes, where he was physically, emotionally and sexually abused. Emancipated at age 17 from a reform school for boys, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy, hoping to learn to become a man.

His story became the 2002 film "Antwone Fisher," starring Denzel Washington. Fisher's autobiography, "Finding Fish: A Memoir," (Harper Publications) was a New York Times bestseller.

On Saturday, Fisher will share his tale, discussing the ripple effects of substance abuse at the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence -- Greater Detroit Area's eighth annual Dignity Awards Fundraising Benefit at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center.

During the ceremony, Kathleen Stacy of Royal Oak, Glynis Anderson of Ann Arbor and Jennifer Tellis of Redford Township will be honored for overcoming addiction and contributing to the substance abuse prevention and treatment communities.

Although Fisher says he has never used drugs, his life shows how one person's addiction affects the community.

But he suggests people may overcome addiction much like he overcame his childhood: by finding answers to life's challenges inside.

"I was so shy growing up. When I had to talk to someone, I would be almost speechless. I learned to pretend I was a person of great self-esteem," he says.

"Then the fear of talking to people went away. There are a lot of things you can do to help yourselves. Get counseling. But once you have had counseling, remember counselors have to move on to other people. Take responsibility for yourself."

*You can reach Kimberly Hayes Taylor at (313) 222-2058 or [ktaylor@detnews.com](mailto:ktaylor@detnews.com).*

## Dignity Awards Fundraising Benefit

**What:** Antwone Fisher will be featured speaker at the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence - Greater Detroit Area's eighth annual benefit.

**When:** Reception 6 p.m. Saturday, dinner 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center, 100 Renaissance Center, Detroit.

**Cost:** \$125.

**For more information:** Call (313) 369-5400.

Friday, November 18, 2005

## **Charities struggle as holidays near**

### **Many area agencies see requests for assistance increasing this year**

By ANDREA MASON  
Times Herald

Tiny twinkling lights, garland, red and green everywhere: Thanksgiving is just around the corner, but it looks more like Christmas.

While area stores are busy gearing up for the holiday shopping season, charities and volunteers are making sure the area needy will have a holiday. And families such as Nicole Lendel's are having the same debate they do every year.

"Why," Lendel, 31, asked, "are we spending all this money on each other when there are people who don't have the things they need?"

Some charities offer holiday baskets, filled with turkey, trimmings and presents.

Others stick to collecting strictly toys for children who might otherwise not have any. But at charities across the Blue Water

Area, it seems requests and offers for holiday help come early. This year the rush, some said, started as early as October.

#### **A hard year for all**

Although offers of help have been rolling in, so have requests for aid, charity workers said. At Downriver Helping Hands in Marine City, director and co-founder Mary Gave has seen the trend.

"Traditionally it's the easiest time of year to get help," she said. But she qualified the statement by adding high heating bills have added to the woes of many poor families in St. Clair County, and many people with tight budgets need help.

"We are not a tremendously rich county," she said.

Downriver Helping Hands is one of several charities that distribute holiday baskets. Last year, they made 250 Thanksgiving baskets and 180 Christmas baskets. Gave isn't sure how many will go out this year, but requests started coming in October.

#### **HOW TO HELP**

**ST. CLAIR CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS**  
615 Pine St., (810) 985-7117, [www.sccrc.org](http://www.sccrc.org)

A Dec. 8 Christmas banquet will be the Red Cross' biggest fund-raiser of the year.

#### **DOWNRIVER HELPING HANDS**

310 S. Parker St., Marine City, (810) 765-3848 or (810) 765-4494.

Collects food, clothing and gift items for Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets.

Gives out holiday baskets year-round, including Fourth of July and Easter.

Thanksgiving dinner served from 2 p.m. until they are out of food Nov. 24 in the Southeast Michigan Conservation Club, 2402 Belle River Road in East China Township; call ahead.

#### **TOYS FOR TOTS**

[www.toysfortotssemi.com](http://www.toysfortotssemi.com)

Collection sites will be set up around the Blue Water Area today.

#### **SALVATION ARMY**

2000 Court St., (810) 984-2679, [www.salvationarmyusa.org](http://www.salvationarmyusa.org)

Thanksgiving dinner from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Nov. 24.

Offers holiday gifts and food for families with children younger than 16; apply in person.

Bell-ringers, Kettle Club paper kettles and countertop kettles located throughout the area.

Giving Tree located at the Birchwood Mall in Fort Gratiot will be set up Nov. 25; items needed specified on each tag.

#### **UNITED WAY OF ST. CLAIR COUNTY**

1723 Military St., (810) 985-8169.

Funds drive has ended. Totals will be available Dec. 8.

Collects money and items in a year-round effort to help those in need and the agencies that serve them.



Bonnie Martin of Port Huron fell on hard times herself these past few years, receiving a Christmas basket from one of the charities last year. She also has been on the other side. Martin, 55, anonymously showed up at an older man's house a few years ago with a check and instructions to buy warm clothing for the winter.

"He was on the bus. It was 19 degrees," she said. "No coat, no boots no nothing."

### **Early, but not often**

This holiday season has gotten off to an early but tough start for many charities, said Geri Smith, chief administrative officer for the St. Clair County Chapter of the American Red Cross.

"I think (high unemployment) affects shopping, and I think that affects all charities," she said.

The organization is hanging its hopes on its big fund-raiser, a Christmas dinner Dec. 8.

The Salvation Army Port Huron Citadel is on track to receive as many or more requests for holiday help this year. Already, 650 families have applied. Last year 1,300 families - with nearly 2,000 children - received aid. Offers to help have been coming in early, but the numbers haven't necessarily increased to match the need, said Jan Wakeham, business director.

"People are calling to adopt families earlier," she said, "I think because shopping has started earlier."

Downriver Helping Hands still has piles of lightweight clothing to go South, but no way to get it there, she said. People across the nation were generous with aid to victims of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, but local charities are seeing the effects of less money left for them.

"God knows those people needed it," Gave said, "need it yet."

### **Heating hits home**

When the wind chill drops, aid agencies are facing some of the same problems as their clients.

Heating costs are expected to rise 40% at The Salvation Army Port Huron Citadel.

"We have to be able to make sure we can pay our bills," Capt. Tim Meyer said.

The Salvation Army Port Huron Citadel bell-ringers were out by Nov. 11 this year. Meyer said the organization wanted to be sure it didn't miss the boat. Bell-ringers started a week later last year and, Meyer said, it cost The Salvation Army about \$10,000 in donations.

This year, Downriver Helping Hands is trying to collect new sweat shirts to distribute in addition to its usual fare. Keeping warm without cranking up the thermostat could be critical to making ends meet for many people, Gave said.

The United Way of St. Clair County is wrapping up its campaign, while others are gearing up. It's been 20 years since the United Way had a holiday-specific drive. The agency discontinued the practice of making and distributing holiday baskets, finding it too difficult to ensure families were taking only one basket from one agency, Executive Director Lonnie Stevens said.

"People need help all year-round, and that is what the United Way is here to do," she said.

Judy Rogerson of Port Huron gives to different charities monthly. And it isn't just in winter when she can be found working in a soup kitchen. Still, she said, the holidays make her want to open her heart and her pocketbook a little bit wider.

"I feel," she said, "that everyone should enjoy the holidays like I do."

*Contact Andrea Mason at (810) 989-6272 or [amason@gannett.com](mailto:amason@gannett.com).*

*Originally published November 18, 2005*

# GKUW tops \$10.35 million goal, applauds community generosity

Friday, November 18, 2005

cricks@kalamazoogazette.com 388-8557

Greater Kalamazoo United Way officials said Thursday that the organization raised a record \$10.35 million during its annual fund-raising campaign.

That exceeds the campaign's goal by \$66,202.

"This is the largest amount ever raised," said Eric Dewey, United Way president and CEO, during an event at Western Michigan University's Fetzer Center. "It is a rock-solid number." The United Way president applauded the community for topping the campaign goal despite a year of "unprecedented natural disasters," economic uncertainty in Michigan and \$3-a-gallon gas prices.

"Over the years, Kalamazoo has created a legacy of philanthropic caring that is unparalleled," Dewey said. "Kalamazoo County ranks in the top 6 percent of all United Ways in the country. It's third in the state of Michigan, despite having only the seventh-largest population."

Some nonprofit agencies around the country feared that giving in local communities would be stymied as Americans give funds to assist communities affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Kalamazoo area's economy has remained soft, Dewey said, while Pfizer announced earlier this year that 500 jobs could be lost in the Kalamazoo area.

Pfizer, however, continues to be GKUW's largest contributor. The company's employees and retirees gave \$1.66 million to the campaign, which was matched by The Pfizer Foundation to bring Pfizer's total gift to \$3.32 million.

Pfizer employees "stepped up to the plate" despite all the change going on with the company, company campaign chairwoman Barbara Devlin said.

Since 1998, contributions from Pfizer active and retired employees, coupled with matching funds, have provided more than \$19.6 million to the GKUW community campaign, Dewey said. Funds donated to GKUW will be used to assist 64 programs administered by 43 member agencies that provide services in Kalamazoo County. GKUW focuses on addressing six areas of basic need: Health care, strengthening families, coping with crisis, increasing self-sufficiency, youth development and community building.

For every \$1 that is given to GKUW, about 89 cents goes to programs that meet needs in the local community. GKUW officials say 11 cents goes for administrative and overhead costs.

"We live in an incredibly generous community," said John Paul, this year's GKUW campaign chairman and community president of Fifth Third Bank.

During the victory celebration at Fetzer, Tyler Williams, 10, who has autism, and his caretaker grandmother, Carolyn Smith, were introduced to the gathering. The two were featured in a "thank you" video that was shown to hundreds of contributors during the campaign.

# United Way lifts ban for agencies

## Fund-raising blackout lifted

Friday, November 18, 2005

By Pat Rombyer

[prombyer@citpat.com](mailto:prombyer@citpat.com) -- 768-4924

The United Way of Jackson County is doing away with its long-standing tradition of banning fund-raising by its partner agencies during the annual fall campaign.

The United Way Board last week approved the measure, a move that some agency directors appreciate.

"It gives us more of a window of opportunity early in the school year," said Susan Sharkey, executive director of the Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. "The blackout occurred during a significant part of the year for us."

Neither Sharkey nor Capt. George Gibbons of the Salvation Army plan major competing fund-raisers during the United Way's fall campaign.

"I hope the move doesn't hurt them. I hope they don't take a big hit," said Gibbons said. He and Sharkey said they see a successful United Way campaign as important for the entire community.

"We're quite optimistic that it won't be detrimental," said Ken Toll, United Way's executive director.

"It's the right thing, the smart thing, to do."

The fund-raising blackout was instituted years ago to keep the community's focus on the campaign during September, October and November.

"We also didn't want the corporations to be bombarded during the campaign with other fund-raisers," Toll said.

But three years ago, the United Way changed the way it funds nonprofit programs in the Jackson community. They stopped funding "member" agencies, of which there were about 16, and began funding specific programs instead.

They quit subsidizing general operating budgets and now dole out dollars for individual programs, such as counseling services, after-school activities and programs that reduce abuse and neglect.

"It was a catch-22 for the agencies," Toll said. "We told them we would be funding programs rather than their organizations and encouraged them to find other sources of funding."

# Annual campaign gears up for giving

Friday, November 18, 2005

By Pat Rombyer

[prombyer@citpat.com](mailto:prombyer@citpat.com) -- 768-4924

About 120 collection boxes for the annual Toys for Tots campaign are headed out today to locations throughout Jackson County in the hope of capturing 8,000 toys for underprivileged children.

"We've been told there will be 1,600 children of all ages that need toys this year," said Mike Brown, Toys for Tots coordinator for the U.S. Marine Corp Reserves. "We need enough to give each of them two stocking stuffers and three new toys."

Toys dropped off at the collection sites should be new and unwrapped. Collection boxes are at all McDonald's restaurants, all area fire stations, and major businesses, including toy stores.

Working with a cadre of 15 volunteers, troopers from the Jackson post of the Michigan State Police and his fellow employees at Art Moehn Chevrolet-Honda, Brown plans to reach the goal and turn the toys over to the Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army handles the registration, distribution and serves as a clearing house for eligible families who need assistance with food and toys at Christmas.

This year, Brown said the state police have joined the efforts by taking over collection sites at the prisons, the county human services building and at larger area businesses.

Volunteers and Art Moehn employees help with the remainder.

"We have 86 employees and I use them," Brown said. "That's Art Moehn's way of giving back to the community."

Families needing assistance with Christmas dinner and toys may contact the Salvation Army at 782-7185.

# Holland Mission meal offers true Thanksgiving

Friday, November 18, 2005

By Shandra Martinez  
The Grand Rapids Press

HOLLAND -- Thanksgiving is the busiest holiday of the year for the Holland Rescue Mission. "It's the family reunion of the Holland Rescue Mission. Folks who have come through the mission come back," said Darryl Bartlett, the mission's executive director. "It's a time to say, 'Hasn't God been good?' It's a real, genuine Thanksgiving meal."

But annual dinner also is an opportunity for new people to enjoy the mission's hospitality, said Bartlett, who is extending a special invitation to homeless, poor or lonely to attend the holiday feast.

The mission's Great Thanksgiving Banquet will take place Wednesday at the Holland Civic Center.

Doors open at 4:30 p.m., and the evening's events include dinner, activities for children, special music by "Braemen Hill," a bluegrass gospel group and child vocalist Addy Holms, a piano performance by David Ortiz, of Liberty University, and a presentation by the Rev. Joe Ortega of "All God's People."

Care packages will be given to those who attend, Bartlett said.

"Holland Rescue Mission doesn't just care for people on the streets," he said. "Our doors are open to anyone in the community who needs assistance. That's what makes the Great Thanksgiving Banquet such a wonderful time. Our table is open to anyone in need."

Traditionally, the mission serves more people at Thanksgiving than at any other meal of the year, according to Bartlett.

"But this event is bigger than our community and our mission. The Great Thanksgiving Banquet is a table stretching from coast-to-coast, where the most vulnerable residents of the community are the welcome guests."

Nationwide, more than 500,000 meals will be offered at more than 275 rescue missions as part of the sixth annual Great Thanksgiving Banquet, making it one of the nation's largest coordinated efforts to provide holiday meals to people in need.

The ministries involved, including Holland Rescue Mission, all are members of the Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, organizers of the event.

***Wayne Briefs***

***Detroit News***

***November 18, 2005***

**Detroit**

## **Church to give turkeys to needy**

For the fourth consecutive year, Greater Grace Temple, Detroit's largest church, is joining with BT Auto of Detroit and the Master's Commission, a nonprofit community group, in giving free Thanksgiving turkeys to needy families. The first 500 who arrive before 10:45 a.m. Sunday, and attend the 11 a.m. worship service, will receive a voucher to pick up a turkey Monday. For information, call (313) 543-6000. Greater Grace is at 23500 W. Seven Mile.

*Wayne Briefs*

*Detroit News*

*November 18, 2005*

**Dearborn**

## **Empty Bowls Dinner is Monday**

The city's annual Empty Bowls Dinner is several months early this year. The dinner is a fund-raiser for charities and allows students to showcase their artwork. The event, usually held in the spring, is 4-6 p.m. Monday at Park Place Banquet Hall, 23400 Park. For a donation of \$5, guests will get a hand-made bowl, created by Dearborn Public Schools art students, and a meal of bread and soup. Proceeds will go to the American Red Cross and Imagine Render, a nonprofit for Empty Bowls.

# **Diners help homeless, buy soup and bowls in Holland, Grand Haven**

Friday, November 18, 2005

The Grand Rapids Press

HOLLAND -- Advocates of food and shelter for the poor hope to raise \$10,000 this year toward a \$25,000 matching grant, in part through soup sold Thursday in Holland and Grand Haven through the second annual Soup for All event.

Soup and bread were sold, along with specially decorated bowls, by the Ottawa Area Housing Coalition to raise funds to help the homeless.

"Last January, the coalition held a one-day point-in-time count and found 147 families in Ottawa County living in homeless shelters," coalition coordinator Andrea Mulder said. "Seventy-two additional families were living with other families in crowded situations or in danger of losing their housing within a month."

Soup served at the Holland Civic Center was prepared by students in the Holland Rescue Mission's culinary arts program to showcase the life skills taught there. Snug Harbor and Dee Lite Restaurant donated signature soups served at Grand Haven's St. Patrick's Church.

The cost of holding the lunch was underwritten by Macatawa Bank so that all funds raised will go toward homeless prevention efforts.

"This year, West Michigan has been very generous in providing support for the many national and international tragedies," said Phil Koning, president of Macatawa Bank. "It is important that we do not forget about the local organizations that have the same critical needs."

"This event is about the community and dedicated health and human service agencies coming together to make a lasting impact in Ottawa County," Mulder said. "The work that the coalition and its members are doing on a daily basis to help the homeless in our community ... is imperative."



# Winter's toll on poor

Thursday, November 17, 2005

That chill in the air feels more ominous than ever. The cost of the energy to heat our homes is already climbing, with some predicting the final bills for the winter will climb by as much as 50 percent from last year.

That affects all of us, but no one more so than the poor. With low incomes and money tight already, the cold weather is sure to create a painful situation. Simply put, turning up the thermostat is not an option for many who need to pay other bills.

Against that backdrop, representatives from local churches and human-service groups like the United Way sat down together Thursday to look at the energy issue head on. Participants were taking aim at how they can help the poor pay their heating costs.

We applaud this initiative and wish we could offer more than good wishes. The energy costs are undeniably bleak, and outside resources offer little encouragement. The state's Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund exhausted its budget in July, long before it was replenished with more money in October. That fund will help, but an expected rise in requests for help may strain its usefulness.

Let's hope the organizers of Thursday's meeting are teeming with ideas. It's encouraging to see that representatives from Consumers Energy also were taking part. Together, they and the community might make this winter a little less harsh for many.

--The Jackson Citizen Patriot

# Help information

Jackson Citizen Patriot

Friday, November 18, 2005

Families needing extra help with gifts and food for Christmas dinner still have time to register at the Salvation Army, 806 E. Pearl St. Registration times are 1 to 3 p.m. and 4 to 7 p.m. today; 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday; and 9 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m. Dec. 12-16. Adults need to bring proof of identification, and birth certificates are needed for all children.

Toys and food will be distributed Dec. 21 and 22. Food only will be distributed to adults on Dec. 20.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**November 17, 2005**

## **Governor Signs Bill Renaming Treasury Building in Honor of Former Secretary of State Richard H. Austin**

LANSING – Governor Jennifer M. Granholm today signed legislation to rename the state's Treasury Building the Richard H. Austin State Office Building. Austin was the longest serving Secretary of State in Michigan.

Granholm praised Austin, saying "Dick was a statesman who always stood tall, a statesman of steadfast principal and upstanding character. So today, we are giving the name of a great statesman to a great state building."

Austin was elected Secretary of State in 1970 and served through 1994. During his 24 years in office, he fought for one of the nation's first mandatory safety belt laws and was an advocate for mandatory motorcycle helmet laws. He was also responsible for streamlining the process to register vehicles and renew driver's licenses. Perhaps his biggest contribution was making Michigan the first state to allow a citizen to register to vote at the same time they registered their vehicle or renewed their driver's license. Michigan's law served as a model for the nation and led to the enactment of the National Voter Registration Act.

Granholm was joined by legislators and family members of the former Secretary of State in the Rotunda of the State Capitol for the signing of Senate Bill 365. The bill was sponsored by Sen. Bill Hardiman.

###